

Interview Tips



Preparation prior to interview

- Organise your clothes for the interview in advance
- Dress conservatively – suitable to the company and the image you wish to project.
- Assemble relevant information beforehand – qualifications, documents etc.
- Understand your remuneration package.
- Research the company so you are able to ask intelligent questions.
- Interviewers often seek practical examples of past behaviour to demonstrate your capabilities. Be prepared to share examples of achievements and past experiences. Ensure you describe the situation, the action you took and the results or outcomes of your action.

Arrival, Initial greeting, small talk

- Be on time – not late and not early.
- You only get one chance to make a first impression. Make it a good one, smile, make eye contact and have a firm handshake.
- Interviewers frequently use small talk to break the ice. Follow the interviewer's lead on this, but don't initiate a lot of small talk yourself.]

Nervousness during an interview

- If you feel your body language is conveying anxiety, it is usually best to verbalise it (eg: I haven't been interviewed in years and I'm a little surprised to find myself nervous.
- verbalising your nervousness often reduces it and interviewers are usually empathetic.

The interview structure

- No two styles of interviewing are the same.
- Go with the flow but remember that interviewers value qualities such as:
 - warmth
 - rapport
 - honesty (never lie)
 - enthusiasm
 - energy
 - clear communication.
- Normally the interviewer gets information from you and then tells you about the position. However, the order of doing things varies from one interviewer to the next.

Finishing off/Indicating interest

- Prepare pertinent questions to ask toward the end of the interview, eg:
 - Is it a new or existing position?
 - What resources are accessible to the position?
 - What is the criteria for measuring success?
 - What long term career opportunities are available?
- Don't initiate any discussion about remuneration at the first interview. However, be open and honest if asked.
- Ask (if you haven't been told) what the process will be after the interview has been completed.
- Make a couple of positive comments that will re-cap highlights of the conversation. Reiterate your strengths.
- If you are genuinely interested, say so.
- Leave the interviewer with a good impression, a smile and a firm handshake.

Follow up

- Immediately after the interview, write a follow up letter regardless of how you think the interview went. Also:
 - express appreciation of time and opportunity.
 - recap/emphasise salient points.
 - add points you didn't cover.
 - reiterate/elaborate how you can contribute.
 - express interest in continuing dialogue.
- If you have been asked to send further information, ensure this is done quickly.

Common traps

- Being too friendly.
- Not listening to questions carefully.
- Saying “we” instead of referring to your own achievements.
- Making very general statements which lack substance.
- Being over enthusiastic.
- Being poorly prepared.
- Slouching, mumbling or speaking slowly.
- Knowing nothing about the company to whom you are talking.
- Making derogatory remarks about your present or former employers.

Some helpful comments

- Not all positions you are applying for will be right for you. The purpose of the interview is to help you (as well as the company) work out if the ‘fit’ is right.
- Remain positive.
- Qualify your referees, ask them what they believe your weaknesses are.

The most commonly asked interview questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What kind of position are you looking for. Why do you want to work in this industry/company?
- Why did you leave your last position?
- What did you do in your previous position? How was your time allocated? What did you like best/least about it? How many people did you supervise? What was the budget responsibility? What did you accomplish?
- Give me some examples of the most difficult problems you encountered in your previous position. How did you resolve them?
- How was your performance measured?
- How did you get along with your manager?
- What are the qualities you look for in a manager?
- How would you describe your own operating/management style?
- What do you consider to be your strongest qualities? What are some of your weaknesses?
- What position do you hope to reach in five years?
- What are your leisure activities? Your hobbies? Why do you like them?
- Tell me something about your personal and family life. What is important to you?